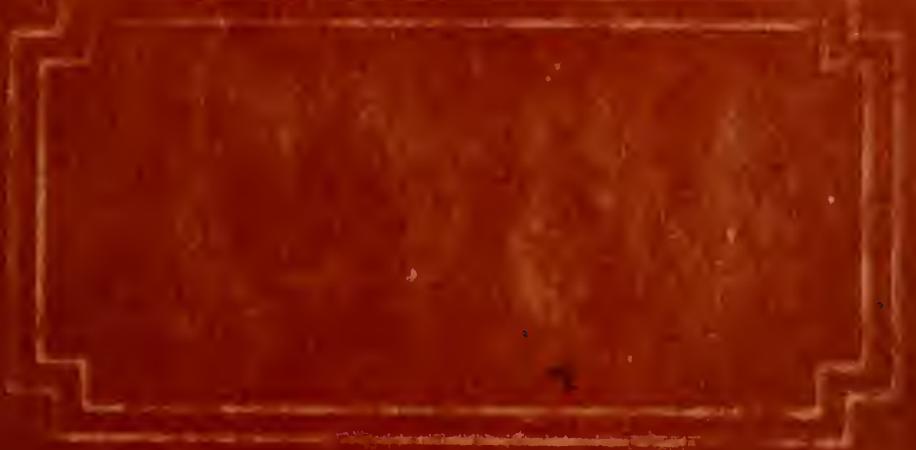


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The Gift of Leeman Everett Haines

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
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Research Study

MANUSCRIPT WRITING

Submitted by

Leeman Everett Haines

(Ed. B., R. I. College of Education, 1942)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for
the degree of Master of Education

1945

First Reader: W. Linwood Chase, Professor of Education
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

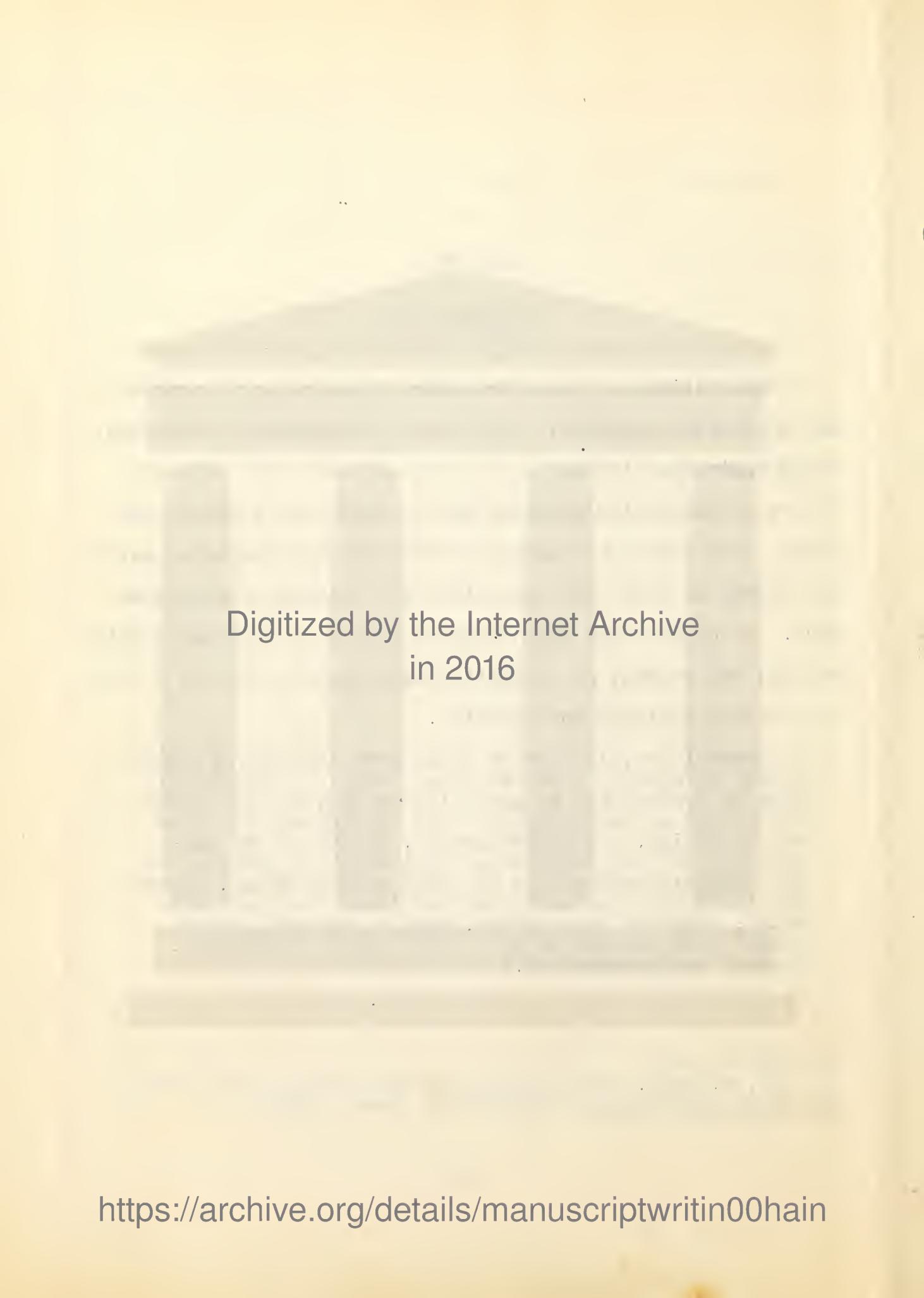
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Handwriting is a tool valuable in so far as it enables one to express thoughts. It is not an instinctive procedure. Every individual in the world today who can write with any degree of legibility whatever had to learn to do so by some means. One does not "learn to write" as one "learns to talk" or "learns to walk" for the latter are natural to the human race. We cannot very well choose a method of teaching a child to talk but we must of necessity choose in our schools a method to teach children how to write.

Handwriting, like every other art, has its different phases of growth, perfection and decay. A particular form of handwriting is gradually developed, then takes a finished or calligraphic style and becomes the hand of its period, then deteriorates, breaks up and disappears, or only drags on an artificial existence, being meanwhile superseded by another style which, either developed from the older hand or introduced independently, runs the same course, and in its turn is displaced by a younger rival. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, article on *Palaeography*.¹

¹H. C. Dent, "The Schools and The Nations Handwriting," *The Nineteenth Century*, 105:387-94, March, 1929.

A very faint, light gray watermark-like image of a classical building with four columns and a triangular pediment is visible in the background of the page.

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Handwriting has evolved to its present stage by a succession of changes from the time of the earliest attempts at picture writing.

Manuscript writing has been under investigation since its introduction into this country some twenty-five years ago.

Since that time there has been much discussion and experimentation in an attempt to determine the relative merits of cursive and manuscript writing.

This study does not attempt to prove any contentions relative to manuscript writing. The writer, rather, attempts to relate the history of its development and present the research in the field with the arguments for and against its use, drawing such conclusions as research indicates.

This study was begun by perusing thoroughly all literature available on the subject with an objective of getting as many opinions as possible both in this country and in England. The bibliography thus acquired is included with the hope that it may be of benefit to others who may be interested in studying in this field. Correspondence was carried on with several people well acquainted with the problem of manuscript writing and also with several publishing companies who produce material on the subject as well as with other agencies having information of value.

The material gathered through this research was carefully considered and is organized as suggested in the table of contents.

This style of handwriting is not a new fad but

a revival of the original handwriting from which all present print and handwriting forms have evolved. To add to its significance it has a precedent of centuries of legible and beautiful handwriting preserved from the past.²

It probably stems from the time of the Italian Renaissance and was used by medieval monks before printing was invented.

Manuscript writing has been variously known as print-writing, print-script, joined-script, script manuscript, script, Italian cursive, script writing, and several other names. It seems best not to use the term "print" in relation to this style of writing because the word "print" has a connotation of the mechanical reproduction while the production of legible handwriting is a manual skill.

Definition. Conard and Offerman³ offer the following definition of manuscript writing:

²Lucia S. Keim, "The Present Status and Significance of Manuscript Writing," Journal of Educational Research, 24:115-26, September, 1931.

³E. U. Conard, and Elizabeth J. Offerman, "A Test of Speed and Quality in Manuscript Writing as Used by Adults," Teachers College Record, 31:449-67, February, 1930.

Manuscript writing is the name given to a simplified form of handwriting which aims at greater legibility, beauty, and speed by doing away with the unnecessary joinings of the letters and using instead the plain letters of the Roman alphabet. It is, in effect, a return to the fifteenth century Italian cursive handwriting.

This simplified form is based upon the circle and straight lines. The writing very closely resembles printing, and upon this point much of the argument in favor of its use is based. ✓

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT



CHAPTER II

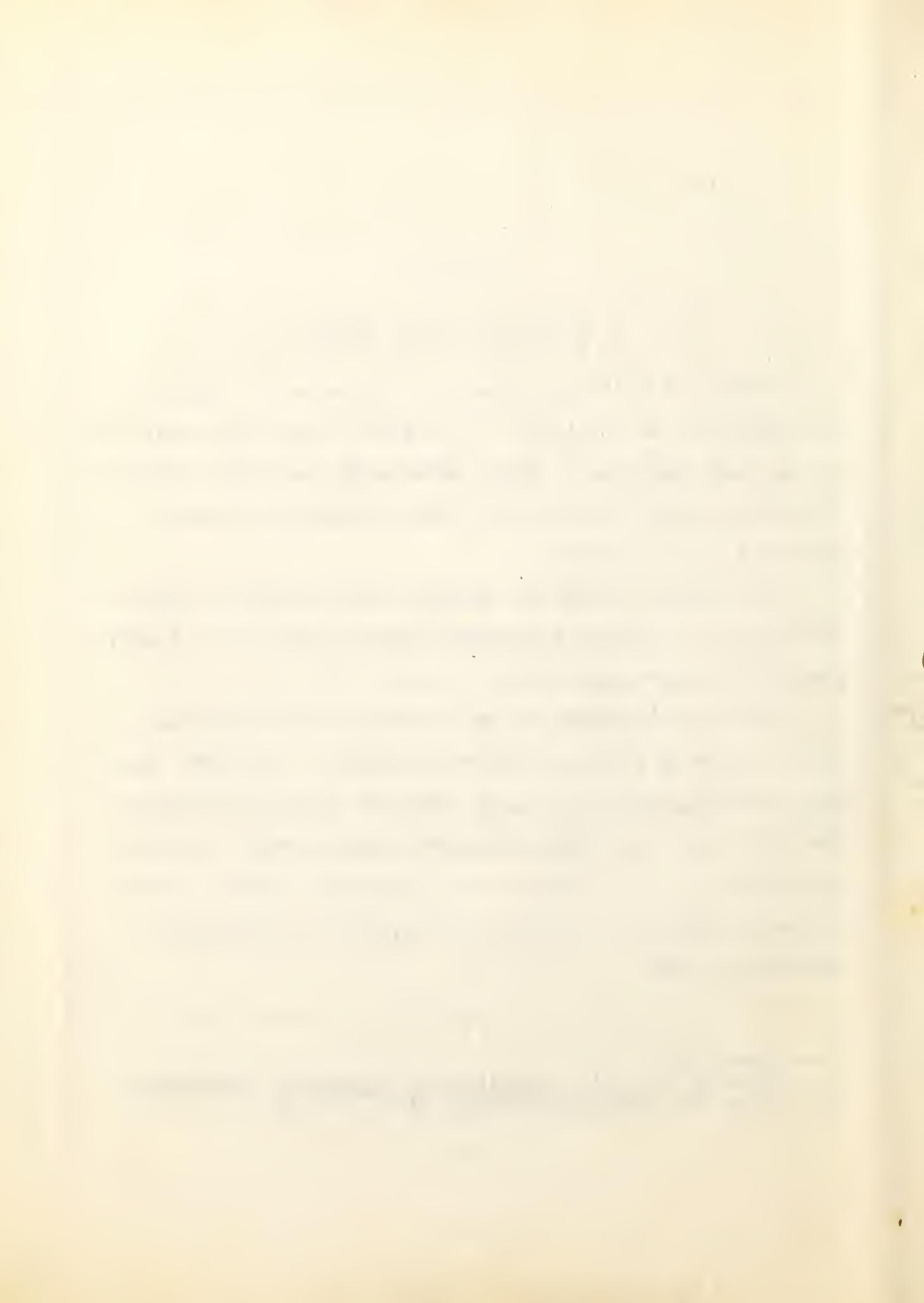
HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT

Manuscript writing was used by the monks of Italy before printing was invented. It is said to have been invented by one Aldus Manutius.⁴ These early monks used and developed this style of writing in their work of reproducing manuscripts by hand copying.

The standard of writing began to decline when, with the invention of printing, the masters of the art were no longer required to reproduce copies.

Early printing made use of a copper plate upon which designs were made with the engraver's tool. The first copper plates differed very little from the cursive writing of the time, the only change being that letters were not made separately but tied together by a connecting stroke. This tended to slant the letters which is easier if connecting strokes are used.

⁴Sheldon E. Davis, Teaching the Elementary Curriculum, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), 124 pp.



The trend was away from the beauty and legibility of the older style and toward more fine strokes and flourishes.

Marjorie Wise⁵ says:

Any eighteenth century copperplate copy-book will serve to show the joy and pride the engraver took in these flourishes; he decorated his books entirely with them, weaving them into fantastic shapes or even elaborate pictures.

This style of writing was adopted as the cursive hand of the time and the Roman capital letters declined into a form with more flourishes which were more difficult to make as well as to read.

Frances Moore⁶ attributes this change largely to the use of a pliable, fine point pen which was necessary in making the fine connecting strokes and flourishes. This had not been possible with the blunt, square point pen used previously.

Manuscript writing was new in England at the time that Queen Elizabeth was learning to write.⁷ It did not begin to make headway in the English schools, however, until about 1913.

⁵Marjorie Wise, "Manuscript Writing," Progressive Education, 5:108-10, April, 1928.

⁶Frances M. Moore, Handwriting for the Broad-Edge Pen, (New York: Ginn and Company, 1926), 35 pp.

⁷Sheldon E. Davis, Teaching the Elementary Curriculum, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), 124 pp.

Several people are credited with popularizing the movement in England, two of them being Edward Johnston and Grailey Hewitt, both illuminators.⁸

Grill⁹ says that

the first suggestion that manuscript writing would be a better kind of writing for children comes from M. M. Bridges who developed a very beautiful style of manuscript writing and published in 1899 a copy book. This was published by The Oxford University Press in 1907 entitled, "A New Handwriting."

The first writing on the subject was done by Professor Shelley of Manchester University who stressed the influence of the engravers.¹⁰ This brought the problem to the attention of school people and experimentation began in the schools about 1917-1918. Certain teachers, dissatisfied with the style of writing then being used and impressed with the beauty and legibility of the style which appears in manuscripts of the Middle Ages, began experimenting with manuscript writing in the schools. They reasoned that children must learn print in order to learn to read, therefore, manuscript writing would make reading easier because it closely resembles the printed form.

⁸ Marjorie Wise, On The Technique of Manuscript Writing, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 14 pp.

⁹ Erma G. Grill, "Manuscript Writing and Its Value to the Sight-Saving Child," Educational Method, 9:407-12, April, 1930.

¹⁰ Wise, op. cit., p. 16

Introduction into United States. We are doubtlessly indebted to Miss Marjorie Wise for the introduction of manuscript writing into the United States. Miss Wise, an English woman and specialist in manuscript writing, came to America in 1921 to study at Columbia University. During her stay she was prevailed upon to slow up work for her advanced degrees and spend part of her time teaching manuscript writing to the future teachers at Columbia and to the children at Horace Mann School and Lincoln School.

Several teachers at Horace Mann School familiarized themselves with the procedure so as to be able to carry on the work when Miss Wise should return to England. Among them was Miss Edith U. Conard, who has continued to study in the field and has offered much of value on the subject.

Manuscript writing apparently has not been as universally accepted in the United States as in England. It seems, rather, to have been treated somewhat cautiously. The first schools to accept this form of writing were private schools. Public schools were particularly wary in accepting it. This seems due, in part, to the unsuccessful attempt prior to 1921 to popularize a so called vertical style of writing. It may be due, also, to the fact that cursive handwriting is the traditional system in this country, and tradition is not

easily upset. The fact is that manuscript writing is still considered by many with a great deal of skepticism. For example, New York City in 1929 refused to recommend the adoption of manuscript writing "because we cannot afford to use a million school children as material for experimentation."¹¹

Extent of use of manuscript writing. The question of the extent of use of manuscript writing cannot be answered accurately. Drohan¹² mentions towns or cities in the following states as having used this style of writing between the years 1921-1936: New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New York, Arkansas, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Washington. Varty¹³ offers the following table to show the growth in the use of manuscript writing:

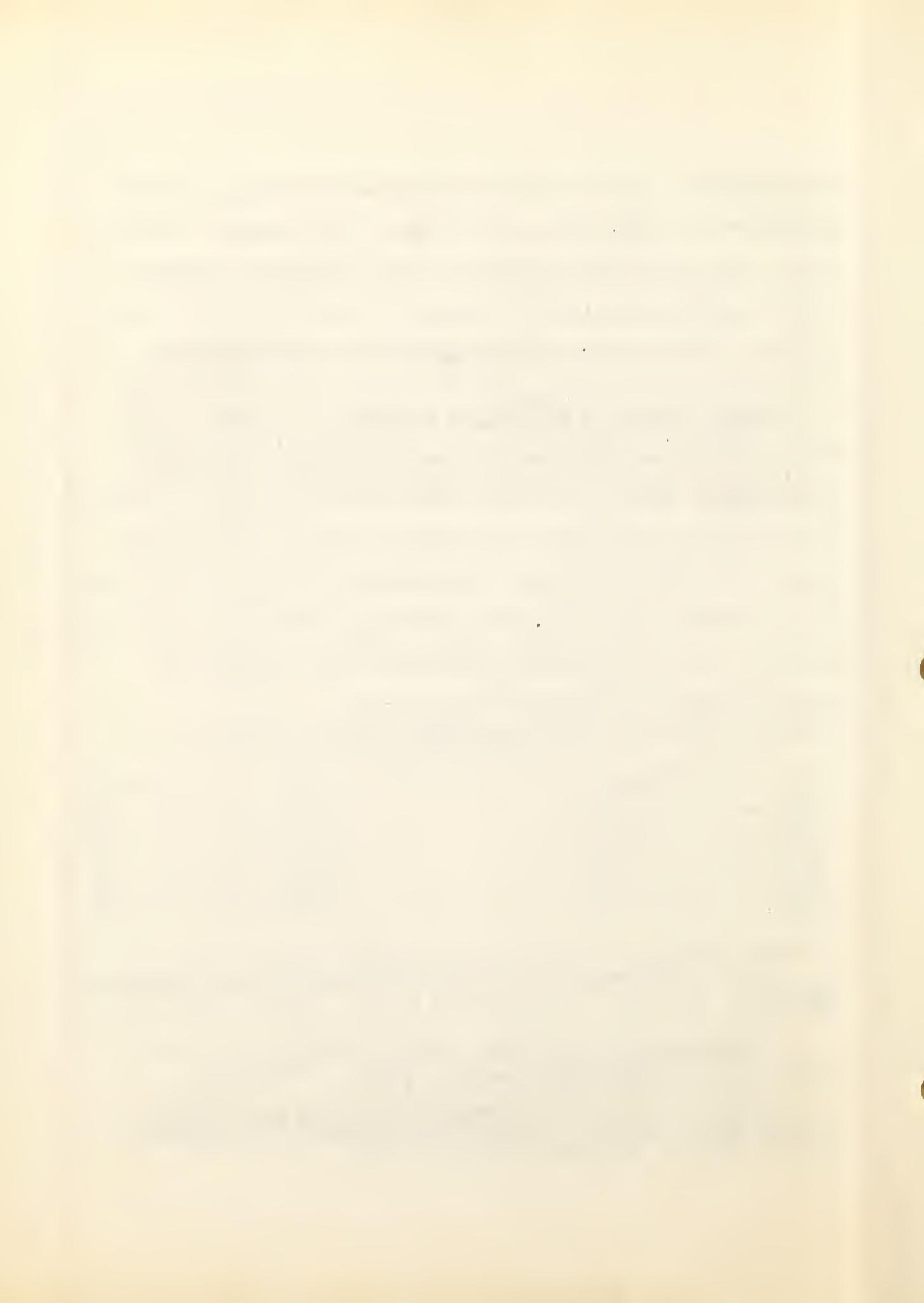
Number of Schools Using Manuscript Writing in Whole or in Part 1900-1937

| Year | No. of Schools | Year | No. of Schools |
|------|----------------|------|----------------|
| 1900 | 1 | 1925 | 83 |
| 1920 | 4 | 1926 | 111 |
| 1921 | 7 | 1927 | 138 |
| 1922 | 12 | 1928 | 150 |
| 1923 | 27 | 1929 | 152 |
| 1924 | 54 | 1936 | 1161 |

¹¹W. H. Burton, and others, The Supervision of Elementary Subjects, (New York: D. Appleton Century Company, Inc. 1929), 206 pp.

¹²Gertrude Drohan, "Extent of the Use of Manuscript or Print-Script," Elementary English Review, 13:287-90, December, 1936.

¹³Jonathan W. Varty, Manuscript Writing and Spelling Achievement, (Teachers' College Contributions to Education), N. 749 New York Teachers' College, 4 pp.



The writer is not aware of any state which requires by law that manuscript writing be taught. The Alabama Course of Study and Teachers Guide for the Elementary School under date 1941,¹⁴ pages 448-449 says:

Manuscript writing is usually used in the primary grades because it is believed by many to be better suited to the muscular development of children, easier for them to learn, and an aid to reading. Manuscript writing in the Alabama schools should be used in the first and second grades and the first part of the third. The transition to cursive writing should be made gradually in the third grade.

¹⁴From a letter from W. Morrison McCall, Director, Division of Instruction, State of Alabama, Department of Education, Montgomery 4, Alabama.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

The literature on manuscript writing seems to indicate that a summary of that literature should concern itself with the areas as treated in the following pages.

Comparative legibility and problem of copying. In speaking of the comparative legibility of cursive and manuscript writing Dr. Frank N. Freeman¹⁵ says:

Because the strokes of manuscript writing are at more clear-cut angles to each other, the forms of the letters are more clearly defined. In cursive writing, on the other hand, as the movement of one stroke changes gradually into that of the next, so the forms of the letters tend to blend into one another. The consequence is that manuscript writing is more legible than cursive, particularly if an attempt is made to distinguish the individual letters. If it is necessary only to distinguish the word wholes in a familiar language, the difference of legibility is much less.

He, also, says:¹⁶

The manuscript writer makes more pauses than does the cursive writer. The cursive writer speeds up more in

¹⁵Frank N. Freeman, "An Evaluation of Manuscript Writing," Elementary School Journal, 36:446-55, February, 1936.

¹⁶Frank N. Freeman, "The Verdict on Further Conflicting Opinions," Normal Instructor and Primary Plans, 38:104-6, April, 1929.

the middle of the strokes. In manuscript writing a rather slow drawing movement is used, broken by many pauses. In cursive writing a more rapid swinging movement is used, with fewer pauses. The manuscript style leads to an emphasis on letter form, while the cursive style leads to an emphasis on fluency and ease.

In discussing what educators interested in growth and development of children's handwriting have reported, Conard¹⁷ says, "manuscript writing is more legible than other forms of writing and the results are neater."

¹⁷ Edith U. Conard, Trends in Manuscript Writing, (New York Bureau of Publications: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1936), 24 pp.

Reporting a study on the comparative legibility of manuscript and cursive writing, Turner¹⁸ presents the following table:

Relative Legibility of Cursive and Manuscript Writing Determined by Reading Specimens of Each in a Mirror

| Grade* | Cursive Writing | | | Manuscript Writing | | |
|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | Average Number of Seconds Required to Read Each Specimen | Average Number of Words in Each Specimen | Average Number of Seconds Required to Read Each Word | Average Number of Seconds Required to Read Each Specimen | Average Number of Words in Each Specimen | Average Number of Seconds Required to Read Each Word |
| II | 6.57 | 10.00 | 0.66 | 6.82 | 10.00 | 0.68 |
| III | 39.00 | 46.40 | 0.84 | 43.84 | 56.73 | 0.77 |
| IV | 50.89 | 50.87 | 1.00 | 64.41 | 83.54 | 0.77 |
| V | 50.48 | 47.66 | 1.06 | 75.87 | 85.83 | 0.88 |
| VI | 91.35 | 108.71 | 0.84 | 96.85 | 141.28 | 0.69 |
| VI | 89.72 | 99.33 | 0.90 | 65.67 | 97.22 | 0.68 |
| VI | 114.93 | 127.50 | 0.90 | 62.68 | 92.75 | 0.68 |
| VI | 90.33 | 91.83 | 0.98 | 64.12 | 85.17 | 0.75 |

*In Grade VI specimens were secured from four schools

¹⁸Olive G. Turner, "The Comparative Legibility and Speed of Manuscript and Cursive Writing," Elementary School Journal, 30:780-86, June, 1930.

Gertrude Hildreth¹⁹ conducted a study to determine whether manuscript or cursive writing is easier for the untrained kindergarten child to copy. A group of twenty-six children were asked to do one exercise in cursive writing and one exercise in manuscript writing.

From the findings and comments of the children during the course of the experiment she determined that manuscript writing was copied with far more ease and accuracy. The correct letter forms were six times more frequent in manuscript than in cursive while correct words were nearly twelve times as frequent.

Comparative speed of manuscript and cursive writing.
Much study and research has been done to establish the relative merits of cursive and manuscript writing. Many of the experiments performed have had too few cases to establish beyond question the conclusions made by the studies. Some authorities say that manuscript writing is slower than cursive²⁰ while others find that it is faster. Opinion, therefore, is still divided on the merits of manuscript writing.

¹⁹Gertrude Hildreth, "Copying Manuscript and Cursive Writing," Childhood Education, 13:127-128, 142, November, 1936.

²⁰Luella Cole, Psychology of the Elementary School Subjects, (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1934), 137 pp.

Dr. Kimmings,²¹ Chief Inspector of the London County Council, gave tests and found that boys from nine to thirteen years of age, in schools where manuscript writing had been used for some time, wrote more rapidly than those using a running hand. However, by thirteen years of age cursive writing becomes faster. On the other hand, however, Washburne and Morphett²² found that children who learn manuscript writing in the elementary grades write almost as rapidly at the high school level as do those using cursive writing, but possibly this group sacrificed quality for speed since no test of legibility was given.

Gates and Brown²³ also report that among children who had had some experience with both types of writing, manuscript was the more popular in the lower grades. This preference, however, was less in grades four and five while in grade six cursive was the choice.

Some of the reasons for their choice as given by children were: (1) It is easier; (2) It is plainer; (3) It is neater;

²¹Marjorie Wise, On the Technique of Manuscript Writing, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 12 pp.

²²Carleton Washburne, and Mabel V. Morphett, "Manuscript Writing--Some Recent Investigations," Elementary School Journal, 37:517-29, March, 1937.

²³Gates and Brown, op. cit., p. 1-14

(4) It is prettier; (5) It is a boy's kind of writing. The most frequent preferences for cursive writing were: (1) It is faster; (2) It is what grown ups use; (3) It is easier.

West²⁴ feels that "it would appear to be a much sounder procedure to teach both styles, possibly from the beginning, letting each supplement the other, and each serve its specific function."

Marjorie Wise²⁵ claims that manuscript writing has raised penmanship from a tool subject to a place among the artistic subjects. She further claims that

more than half the difficulties in teaching handwriting during the last century came from the fact that the forms had been determined by engravers, not penmen. They were easy to achieve with an engravers tool, but full of difficulties to a penman.

In a larger study with 9,264 girls from the ages of seven to thirteen who had been using manuscript writing for at least two years, Dr. Kimmins found that the younger children wrote more rapidly, but at the age of twelve to thirteen the speed was practically the same.

²⁴Paul V. West, "Some Pros and Cons of Handwriting," Progressive Education, 7:211-15, June, 1930.

²⁵Marjorie Wise, "Manuscript Writing," Progressive Education, 5:108-10.

Turner²⁶ found that speed is promoted by manuscript writing up to grade six, while Gray²⁷ found that speed was promoted by cursive writing from grade five as well as for adults. Washburne and Morphett²⁸ give data to show that adults may write manuscript style as rapidly as cursive style.

Reeder²⁹ conducted an experiment at Horace Mann School to attempt to determine relative speeds of manuscript and cursive writing. The study was carried out over three and one half months with three fifth grades and four fourth grades. One of the fifth grades used cursive, one manuscript, and the other cursive for half the period and manuscript the rest. All four of the fourth grades used manuscript writing. The teachers were directed to spend three fifteen minute periods per week in writing drill. Speed was stressed more than form in these drill periods. At the end of three and one half months four samples of handwriting were taken from each member of the group, two of which were at his normal rate, a third at his fastest speed, the fourth disregarded speed and stressed quality only. All samples were then graded on the Thorndike

²⁶Turner, op. cit., p. 780-86.

²⁷Gray, op. cit., p. 259-72.

²⁸Washburne and Morphett, op. cit., p. 517-29

²⁹Edwin H. Reeder, "An Experiment with Manuscript Writing in Horace Mann School," Teachers College Record, 28:255-60, November, 1926.

Handwriting Scale and the letters in each counted. Averages for both speed and quality were then obtained for each child.

The results of the experiment showed that both groups had increased in speed and quality--the cursive group gaining more in quality than the manuscript group but less in speed. This would tend to indicate that attempts to increase speed were more successful with the manuscript groups than with the cursive groups. The study tends, also, to prove that speed in manuscript writing can be brought to a point of necessary efficiency without undue stress.

An analysis of the movements used in manuscript and cursive writing by means of the motion picture was made by Gray.³⁰ The experiment was conducted with ten adults who used both styles of writing and ten children who used manuscript form.

He found that the lifting of the pen in manuscript writing tended to slow down the speed of writing because the lifting of the pen causes more pauses, and the individual strokes are not made with the speed attained in cursive writing.

These studies seem to show that fact and opinion do not prove that manuscript is either slower or faster than cursive writing. Until more and larger studies are done which

³⁰Gray, op. cit., p. 259-72.

are comprehensive enough to establish some definite findings, the question of speed will remain highly debatable.

Grade placement of change to cursive writing. Opinions expressed in the literature seem to indicate that if manuscript writing is used in the lower grades, a change to cursive form should eventually be made. Authorities differ, however, in the grade recommended for the change. Some advocate a change as early as the second while nearly all agree that the change should be complete by grade six. In Winetka, Illinois, however, pupils are given a choice of changing from manuscript to cursive or continuing manuscript, the decision being based largely upon parents' desires.

Houston³¹ feels that the change should be made in grade two for the habits will be too far advanced to be broken without difficulty if continued longer. Freeman³² in a questionnaire found that of forty-nine schools reporting, thirty-two taught manuscript writing only in grade one or grades one and two.

³¹Harry Houston, "Planning Handwriting Instruction," Childhood Education, 13:123-26, November, 1936.

³²Freeman, op. cit., p. 446-55.

Arnold³³ is of the opinion that the change can be made easily in grade four while Washburne³⁴ gives as his judgment that if the change is to be made at all, it should not be attempted earlier than the junior high school.

Manuscript writing as an aid to beginning reading. ✓ The statement that manuscript writing as used by young children is a definite aid in beginning reading seems well proven. The letter forms very closely resemble the figures on the printed page, and the transfer of learning is easily made.

Several studies have been made in this field to substantiate the claim. One of the better known is by Thelma G. Voorhis,³⁵ which attempted to discover the influence of both manuscript and cursive writing on beginning reading.

The study was made with six first grade classes of a Brooklyn, New York, public school. Two groups were excluded from the study namely; those with an I.Q. below 72, and those making up a "rapid advance" group. While the manuscript and cursive groups were practically equal in chronological age, there was a difference in intelligence in favor of the

³³ E. W. Arnold, "The Transition from Manuscript to Cursive Writing," Elementary School Journal, 33:616-20, April, 1933.

³⁴ Washburne and Morphett, *op. cit.*, p. 517-29.

³⁵ Thelma G. Voorhis, The Relative Merits of Cursive and Manuscript Writing, (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1931. 58 pp.



manuscript group. The mean I.Q. for the cursive group was 92.33 with a range of 72-127 and a standard deviation of 11.81. The mean for the manuscript group was 96.35 with a range of 72-119 and a standard deviation of 9.64. The findings are stated as follows:

In interpreting the results of this experiment it is necessary to keep in mind certain limitations. In no case was there as large a number of children as was desirable. In some cases the groups were exceedingly small. Statistical interpretation in such cases is highly unreliable and is included in this report as suggestive of general trends and not as precise and conclusive evidence.

It should be remembered also that the children in the manuscript group had a slight advantage in general mental level, having about four points higher I.Q., on the average, than the children in the cursive group. However, this advantage was eliminated by the selection of two smaller groups that were equivalent in I.Q.

With these qualifications we may report the findings of this experiment as follows:

1. Distribution of reading scores of pupils in each group without regard to kindergarten training, sex, or general level points to the decided superiority of manuscript over cursive writing in its influence on beginning reading.

2. There was almost no difference between the scores of the boys and the scores of the girls. At the beginning of the experiment the boys' and girls' reading scores were practically identical. In June the difference between the means was less than one and one half words in the girls' favor a difference that is statistically insignificant.

3. The children with kindergarten training scored approximately one-half word higher, on the average, in

the June survey than did the non-kindergarten trained children. Although this difference is small, it is fairly reliable. However, the difference between the kindergarten and non-kindergarten groups was very slight when compared with the difference between the cursive and manuscript groups. Thus it appears that for these particular children, attendance in kindergarten has much less influence on reading than has the choice of form of handwriting.

4. Manuscript writing is distinctly superior to cursive writing in its effect upon reading for each of the five mental-level groups studied.

All data from this investigation indicate that manuscript is distinctly superior to cursive writing in the facilitation of beginning reading.

It is possible that the use of less phonetic methods of teaching reading would reflect less transfer from the manuscript writing. Also, it is possible that a different group of teachers would achieve different results. Repetition of the experiment, however, would probably yield a difference in the same direction that is, in favor of the manuscript group, though the difference might not be as great as that found to exist between the two groups in the present investigation.

While it has always been recognized that there was a close relationship between reading and writing, authors of first-grade primers and readers express widely differing opinions concerning the influence of manuscript writing on reading. Of forty-five reading manuals examined, four authors prescribed script, seventeen recommended print, nine made no choice, twelve suggested a combination of print for blackboard and seat work, while three made no mention of handwriting. Of sixty-two authors of primary readers (exclusive of those mentioned above), sixteen favored script, ten favored print, eleven made no choice, twenty recommended a combination of methods, while five made no mention of type of handwriting to be used in word drills. In no case was experimental evidence submitted in support of the author's opinion.

If the real influence of manuscript writing on beginning reading is as great as that indicated by the results

of the writer's study, primary teachers and supervisors should take cognizance of the fact in their classroom practice. Authors of primary readers might well suggest in their teachers' manuals the use of manuscript writing.

Other studies bearing upon this point were done by Drohan,³⁶ Cutright,³⁷ and Houston.³⁸

Manuscript writing and spelling achievement. Again this point seems debatable for research offers findings which are in conflict.

A study by Lindahl³⁹ tends to support the statement that the teaching of manuscript writing promoted the learning of spelling. The report of her experiment ends with this statement.

In view of the fact that the median for the children who had been taught manuscript was almost three times as large as the median for the children who had been taught cursive writing, we may conclude that this study seems to support the statement that the teaching of manuscript writing indirectly promotes the learning of spelling.

³⁶Gertrude Drohan, "Extent of the Use of Manuscript Writing or Print-Script," Elementary English Review, 13:287-90, December, 1936.

³⁷Prudence Cutright, "Script-print and Beginning Reading and Spelling," Elementary English Review, 13:139-41, April, 1936.

³⁸Harry Houston, "Manuscript Writing and Progress in Reading," Elementary School Journal, 39:116-18, October, 1938.

³⁹Hannah M. Lindahl, "The Effect of Manuscript Writing on Learning to Spell," Childhood Education, 14:277-78, February, 1938.

Varty⁴⁰ concluded, however, that manuscript writing was of no more value in fostering spelling gain than cursive writing. He feels that if manuscript writing does help that it is probably because of incidental learning.

Advantages and disadvantages. Many claims have been made by the proponents of manuscript writing putting forth its advantages over cursive writing. Some of these claims seem to be supported by evidence while others appear to be merely subjective judgment. For example, the argument that manuscript writing is an aid in learning to read seems well substantiated by research, but the claim that manuscript writing is prettier is only an opinion and is open to rebuttal.

There are many lists of advantages and disadvantages which have been compiled since Marjorie Wise first wrote on the subject. The writer here presents the most common statements of the advantages and disadvantages as found in the literature.

Conard and Offerman⁴¹ offer the following list:

⁴⁰ Johathan W. Varty, Manuscript Writing and Spelling Achievement, No. 749, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1938), 39 pp. Contributions to Education.

⁴¹ Edith U. Conard, and Elizabeth Offerman, "A Test of Speed and Quality in Manuscript Writing as Used by Adults," Teachers College Record, 31:449-67, February, 1930.

Advantages

1. Beginners need to familiarize themselves with only one alphabet instead of two when reading and writing are taught at the same time. The amount of time and effort necessary is, therefore, reduced through the use of one alphabet.
2. Young children learn manuscript writing with greater ease and speed than they do other types of writing.
3. The simpler letter forms of manuscript writing reduce physical strain.
4. The greater ease permitted produces not only more rapid learning, but also more beautiful and more accurate writing in a shorter time.
5. Manuscript writing satisfies the young child's desire to write.
6. Longer practice is possible without causing fatigue, displeasure or dissatisfaction.
7. Therefore, writing can be introduced earlier without the danger of fatigue from premature use of the small muscles of fingers and arms.
8. Business men both in England and America have voiced their approval of manuscript writing and have established classes for clerical workers who have not learned it in school.
9. Some educators are convinced that manuscript writing has improved spelling, as the mental image of the written form is practically the same as that of the printed form.
10. The simpler letter forms have been found to reduce eye-strain.

Similarly Marine⁴² offers these as the advantages of manuscript writing:

⁴²Ida L. Marine, "Manuscript Writing, Its Advantages and Some Teaching Procedures," Grade Teacher, 55:26, November, 1937.

1. It is easier to learn, being based on the circle, or a part of the circle, and the straight line.
2. It is more legible because of the absence of loops, joining strokes, and flourishes, all of which tend to confuse young children.
3. Children learn one alphabet for both reading and writing, which is especially valuable when the class is composed largely of foreign-speaking children.
4. It stimulates and facilitates reading.
5. It stimulates and facilitates spelling because the mental image of the written word so closely resembles its printed form as to reduce the number of mistakes.
6. It is neat and hence leads to neatness and orderliness in other work.
7. It meets the need of the child's early desire to write, and lends satisfaction and enjoyment to other activities.
8. It causes less eye-strain because the definite combination of the circle and the straight line eliminates acute angles.
9. It decreases physical fatigue in immature muscles so that children with poor muscular control can produce legible results. The lifting of the pencil between strokes lessens muscular fatigue.
10. It requires little drill for improvement since the children can see and understand the formation of the letter forms by the teacher.
11. Speed in manuscript writing in the first grade is equal to, if not greater than, that of cursive writing.
12. Left-handed children in the first grade write better forms and with greater ease in manuscript than in cursive writing due to the elimination of loops and connecting lines.

In 1935 Edith U. Conard⁴³ stated the advantages of manuscript writing as follows:

Through manuscript writing, children's interests and needs "to write" are more easily carried out. It is adaptable to the ability of children at different age levels. Teachers feel that there is less fatigue in the actual doing and therefore less strain produced on immature muscles, for the child may lift his pencil when making the strokes. Preliminary drill on strokes is unnecessary. Children develop form through use rather than building form before use. Even children who have poor muscular control can produce understandable results, the work being legible and easily read. Reading and writing interests are found to be closely associated through using manuscript form of letters, for the child learns one alphabet for both his reading and writing situations. The materials for reading charts, notices, and so on, are quickly and attractively made. Children find more uses for the manuscript form of writing which leads to more varied activities.

Disadvantages

The disadvantages of manuscript writing are not as clearly stated as the advantages and seem less convincing.

As a result of a questionnaire Freeman⁴⁴ offers these as the most common criticisms:

1. Difficulty in changing to cursive.
2. Slow or probably so.
3. Difficulty in transferring to schools which do not use it.
4. Parents must be convinced.

⁴³Edith U. Conard, "The Growth of Manuscript Writing in The United States," Childhood Education, 11:171, January, 1935.

⁴⁴Freeman, op. cit., p. 446-55

5. Less rhythmic and encourages finger movement and bad posture.

6. Difficult to read cursive.

Beatty⁴⁵ says:

1. Writing looks alike and lacks character.
2. Probably not as rapid. (Proven to be about same).
3. Manuscript signature may not be legal.

An editorial in the Elementary School Journal, January 1926, says:⁴⁶

it is possible that manuscript writing is not so well adapted to a free and easy movement as is script writing. Much study has been given to the conditions which favor a free writing movement. It is found necessary to adjust the position of the paper and the hand so that the hand may move readily across the line. Manuscript writing does not seem to favor this lateral movement. It is also possible that disconnected writing is more fatiguing than is connected writing. It seems probable that connected script developed as a result of the demands for free and easy writing and that it is therefore superior to disconnected writing.

However, the Primary Supervisor⁴⁷ of Richmond, Virginia, reports that manuscript writing has not been adopted in any grades in Richmond because the writing vocabulary of the child is very small and all words which a child desires to make a

⁴⁵Willard W. Beatty, "Manuscript Writing: An Effective Tool for Adult Life," Nations Schools, 18:30-32, September, 1936.

⁴⁶Editorial Review, "Manuscript Writing," (by F. M. Moore), Elementary School Journal, 26:331-33, January, 1926

⁴⁷Louise F. Broaddus, "Manuscript vs. Cursive Handwriting," Virginia Journal of Education, 31:244-45, March, 1938.

part of his vocabulary are just as well presented in cursive writing. She says:

✓ The use of the blackboard is important, at first, for the development of the large arm muscles. The children are encouraged to make large drawings and paintings and to enjoy the games and rhythms. This is direct training in muscular control and splendid preparation for writing. Then comes the day when Johnny needs to write something. He tries, and realizes his technique needs improving. Here is where the wise teacher begins meaningful drill—not technique as an end in itself—but improvement of the technique as a means to an end.

Proponents of manuscript writing refute this point of view with the statement that modern education places a premium on the ability of each child to gain a feeling of success and satisfaction. Psychologically, the use of manuscript writing in the lower grades is of great benefit to the child. When little fingers can make only scribbles in an attempt at cursive writing, they are able to produce manuscript writing which is entirely legible and satisfying. The feeling of success actually expedites learning. Reeder⁴⁸ in discussing this says: "This is not a matter for dispute; it is amply proved by both the testimony of the teachers and the papers of their pupils."

⁴⁸Edwin H. Reeder, "Needed Experimentation in Manuscript Writing," Progressive Education, 14:20-22, 91-92, 106-108, April, May, June, 1928.

Manuscript writing was introduced into grade one of Chicago Public schools because⁴⁹ "it is the easiest means of satisfying the young child's desire for expression, and it aids in the process of learning to read."

Conard⁵⁰ explains that experiments have shown that in the first grade correct letter forms are made six times more frequently in manuscript writing than in cursive. Also, experiments have shown that words are spelled correctly twelve times as frequently.

In speaking of the disadvantages of manuscript writing Freeman⁵¹ further says that

There seems to be some tendency for children to write letters in reverse order somewhat more in manuscript writing but this tendency appears not to be pronounced. There seems to be no confirmation of the idea that it leads the child to read by letters.

⁴⁹ William H. Johnson, "The Improvement of Handwriting," Elementary School Journal, 43:90, October, 1942.

⁵⁰ Edith U. Conard, "Purpose and Procedure in Manuscript Writing," Instructor, 52:24, February, 1943.

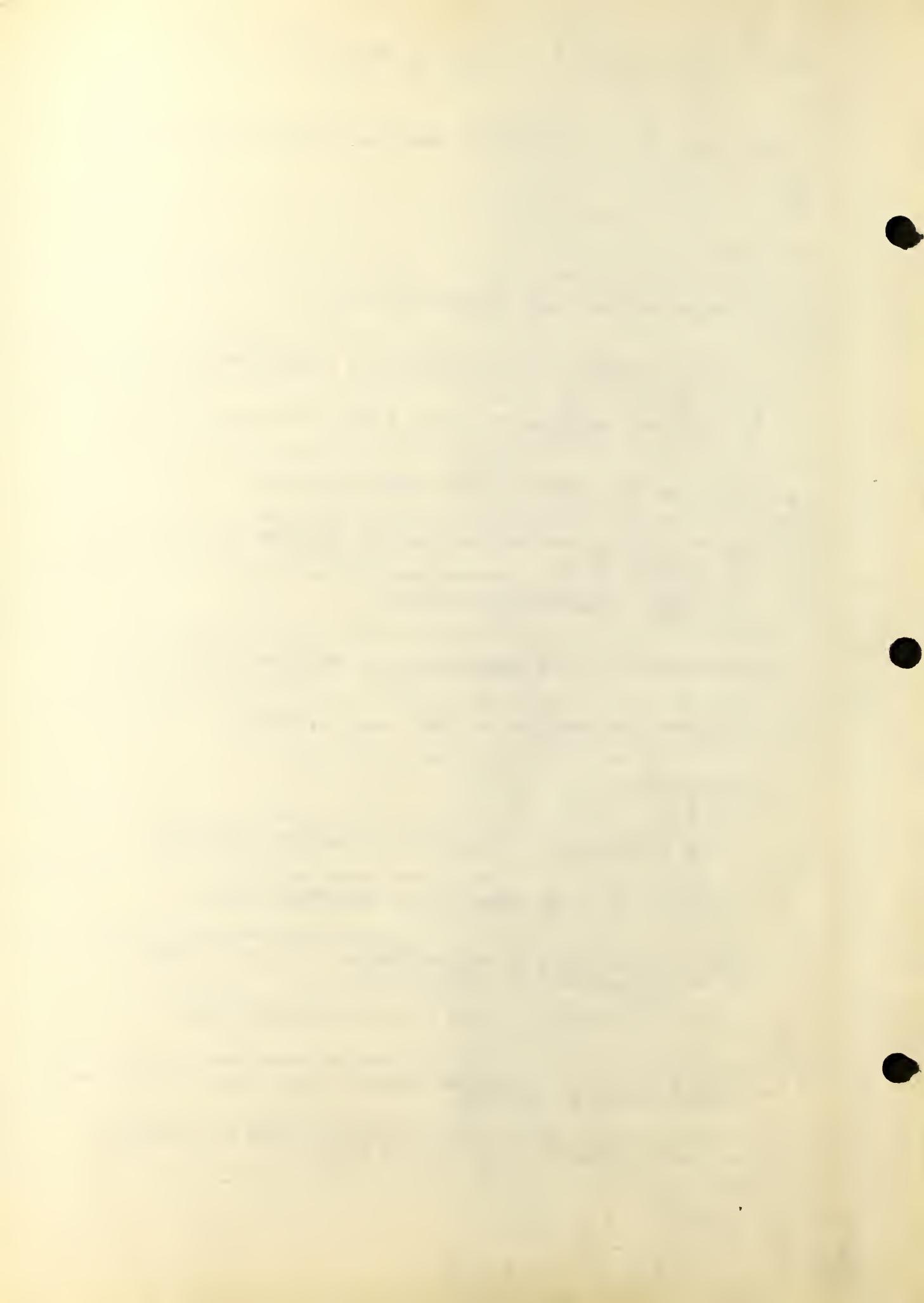
⁵¹ Frank W. Freeman, "The Implications of Research--Research for the Classroom Teacher," "The Language Arts: Handwriting," National Education Association, February, 1939.

The Following Table is Offered by Varty:⁵²

Advantages and Disadvantages Ascribed to Manuscript Writing

| Advantages | Conard | Drohan | Freeman | Voohis |
|---|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| 1. Is more legible than cursive writing | x | x | x | x |
| 2. Enables children to use writing as a form of expression much sooner | x | | x | |
| 3. Is easy for children to learn because of simple strokes | x | x | x | x |
| 4. Satisfies the child's keen desire to write | x | x | x | x |
| 5. Helps in early reading because of similarity of written and printed form | x | x | x | x |
| 6. Apparently causes less fatigue | x | | x | x |
| 7. Contributes to the improvement of children's spelling | x | x | x | x |
| 8. Involves the learning of only one alphabet | x | x | x | x |
| Disadvantages | | | | |
| 1. Causes difficulty in changing to cursive writing | | x | x | |
| 2. Is slower and less fluent than cursive writing | | x | x | x |
| 3. Creates difficulty in transferring to schools which do not teach manuscript writing | | x | x | |
| 4. Is more difficult to read than cursive writing | | x | x | x |
| 5. Tends toward a stereotyped letter form, thus eliminating individuality in writing | | x | | x |
| 6. Causes disappointment on part of children and parents, because cursive writing is not taught | | x | x | |

⁵²Varty, op. cit., p. 5



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

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CONCLUSIONS

The writer has already stated in the introduction of this study that no attempt is made to prove anything relative to the problem of manuscript writing. Rather the study tries to bring together all the opinions available, stating such conclusions as seem consistent with the findings.

In the light of the evidence presented in the foregoing chapters, the following conclusions seem well founded:

1. More research is needed, particularly with large groups of children in order to establish more definitely the advantages or disadvantages of manuscript writing.
2. The evidence with respect to the relative merits of manuscript and cursive writing is still somewhat conflicting. However, the weight of the evidence seems to indicate that manuscript writing is more suitable to young children, while above the fifth or sixth grades cursive writing tends to be superior.

3. Tests do not prove conclusively that manuscript writing is either faster or slower than cursive writing for any age group. The evidence to date shows the speeds to be equal. Opinion on the matter is widely diversified.
4. Of all the claims of the proponents of manuscript writing the statement that it is an aid to beginning reading seems best supported by research.
5. If children are taught manuscript writing in the lower grades, the majority opinion favors a change to cursive writing somewhere from grade two to grade six.
6. Research has not proven beyond doubt that manuscript writing is an aid in spelling achievement.

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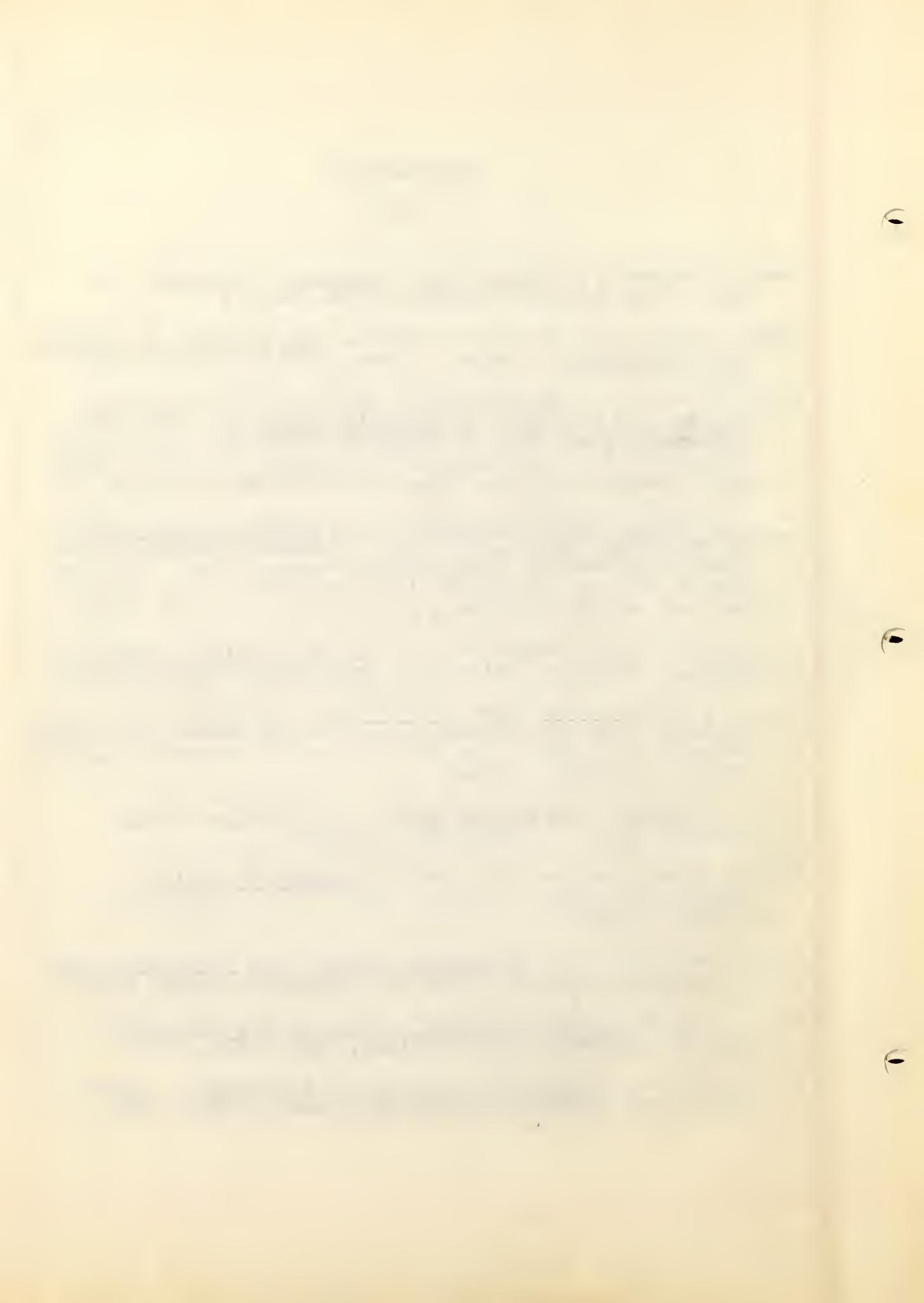
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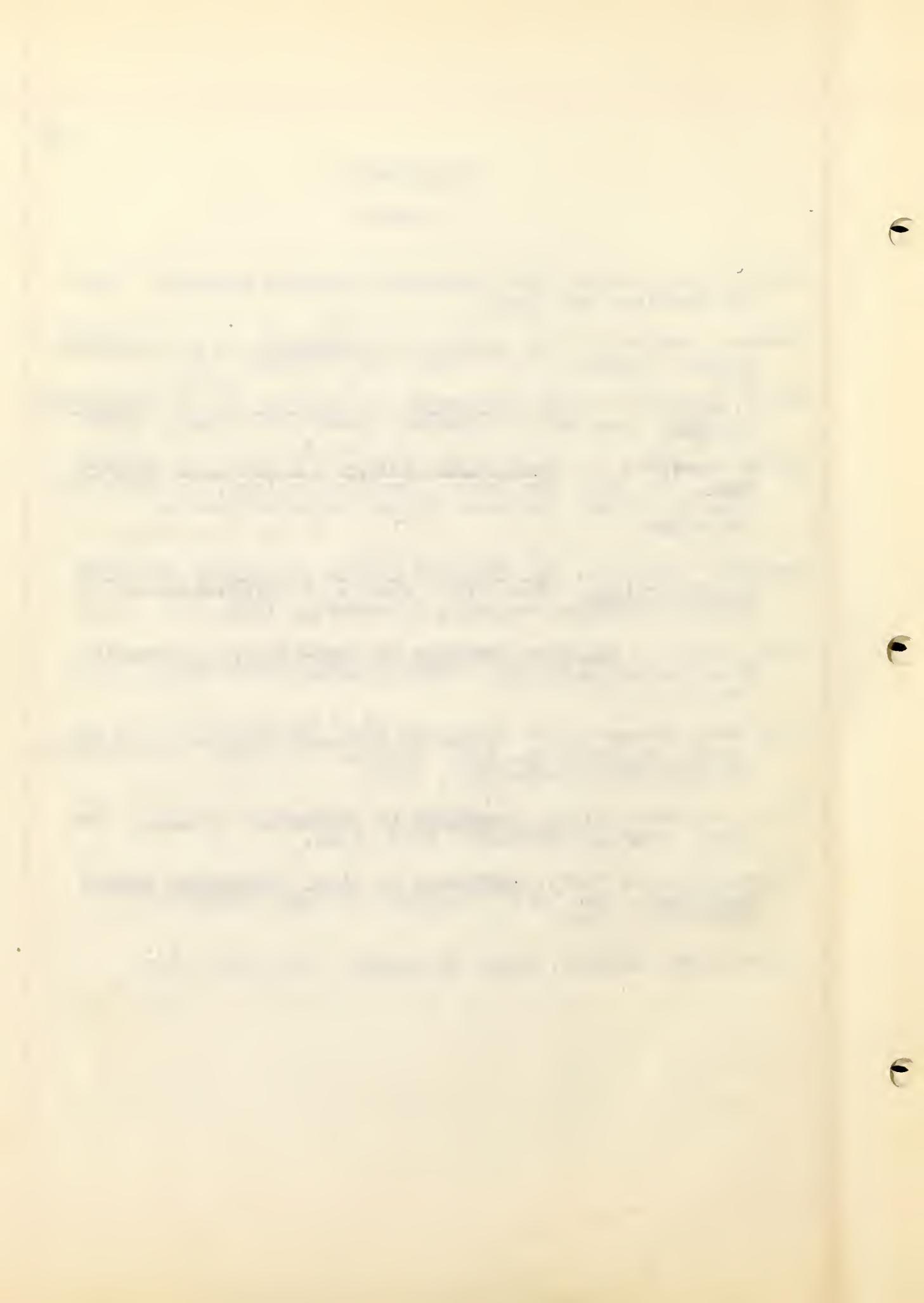
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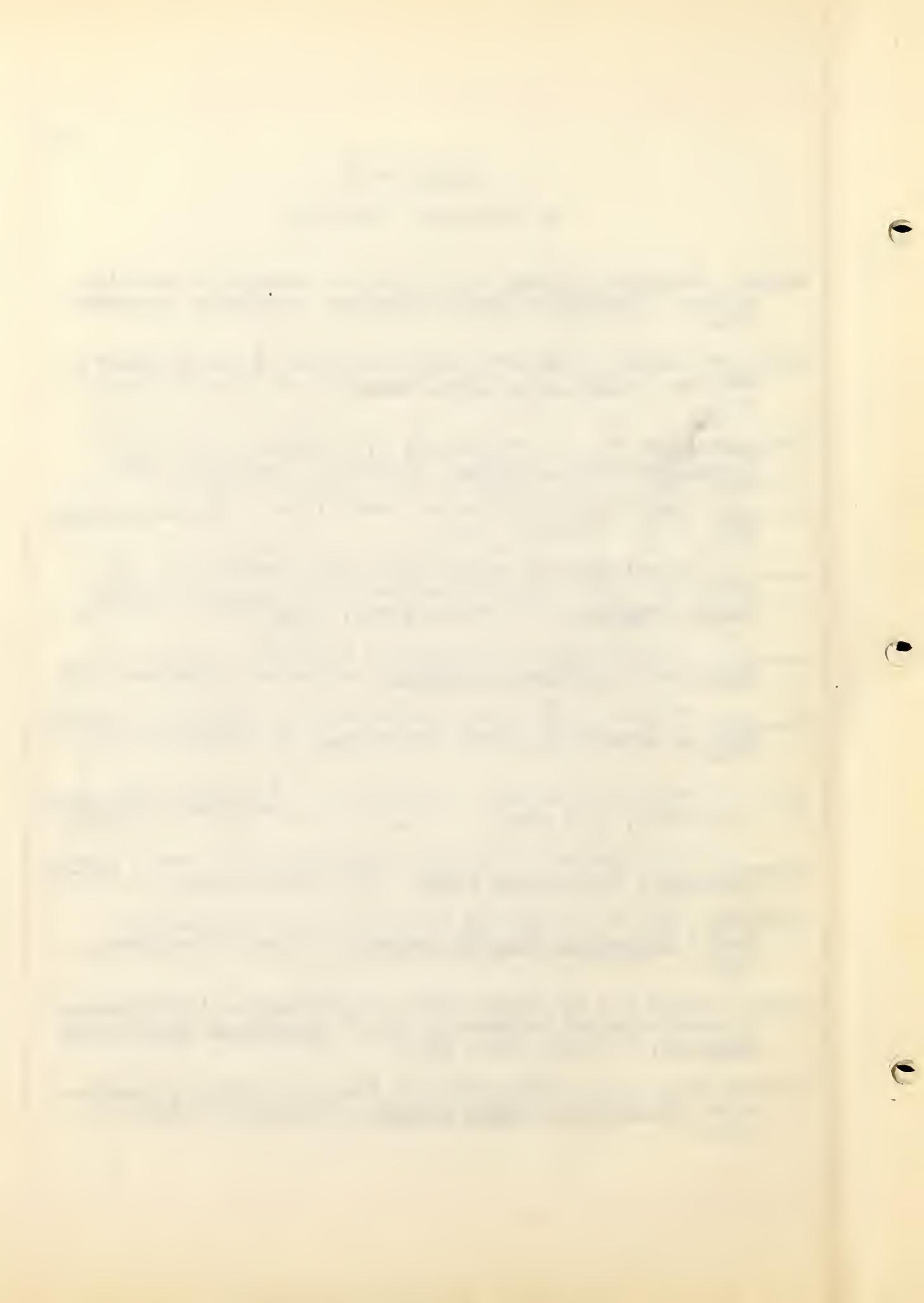
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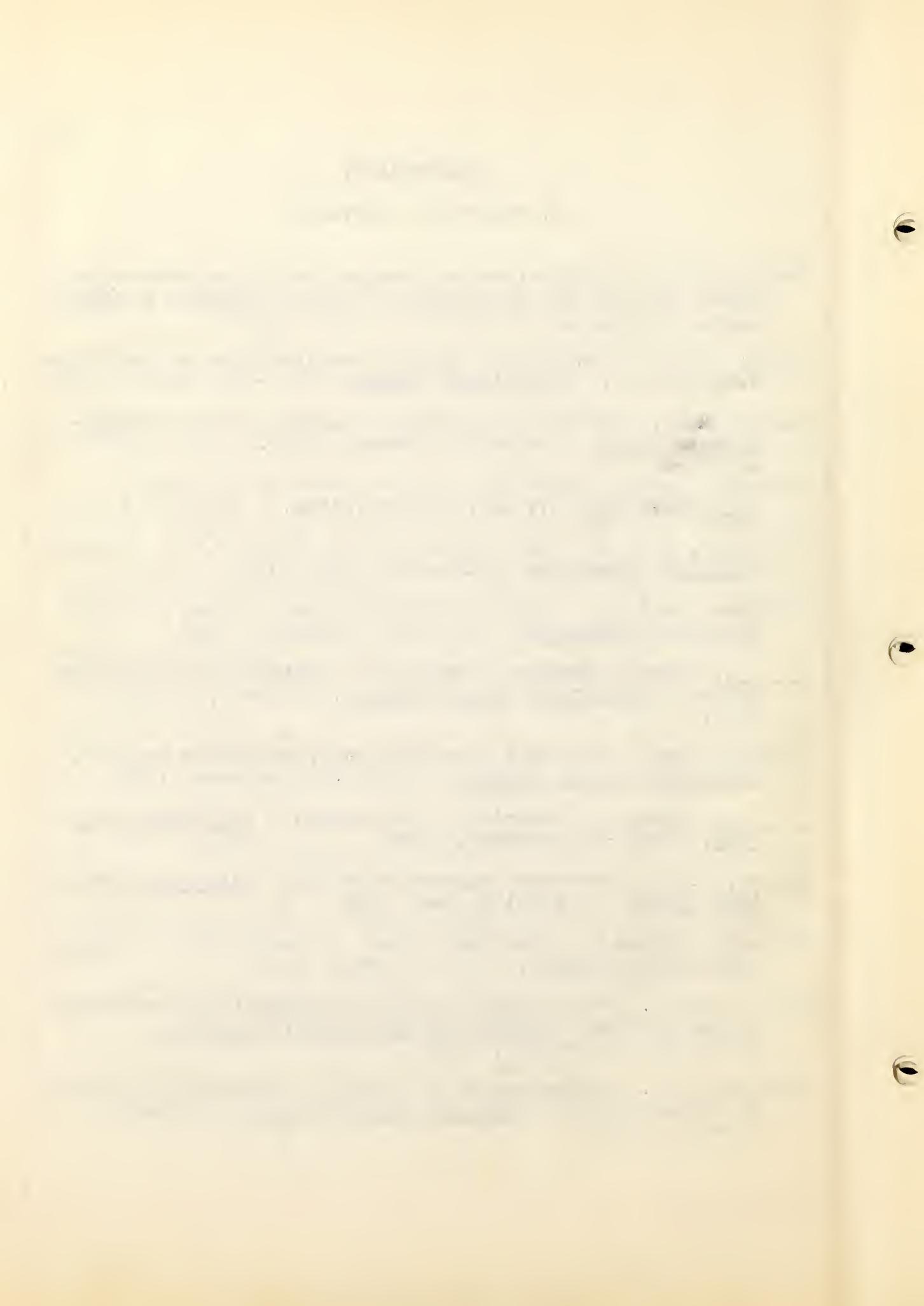
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